The Patent Office

Application No:	GB0420247.9	**Examiner:**	Mr Ben Widdows
Claims searched:	1-23	**Date of search:**	16 December 2004

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X,Y	X:1-8,12,13,16,19,21&23 Y:17&18	EP 0011671 A1 (OPTICODE INC) see esp. fig 1 and pages 3-20&48-50;
Y	17&18	US 2002/0020746 A1 (ROUSTAEI) see esp. claim 1

Categories:

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^W :

G4M

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC^{07}

G06K

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

WPI, EPODOC, JAPIO

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Latest date for reply: | 12 September 2005 | Page 1/2

Patents Act 1977
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 & 18(3)

Novelty

1.   The invention as defined in claims 1,2,5,6,8,12,13,16,19,21&23 is not new because it has already been disclosed in the following document:

EP 0011671 A1 (OPTICODE INC) see esp. fig 1 and pages 3-20&48-50;

2.   EP 0011671 discloses a signature verification system which includes documents (see fig 1) which bear a cryptographic representation (16 – fig 1) of a function of a position-invariant transform of a reference signature (12) of an authorized user i.e. encoded selected authentication data. This data is encoded using a cryptographic key (or "cryptokey") which is printed on the document (18,20) in the form of a bar-code. When the document is to be authenticated, the encoded data 16 and cryptokey 18,20 are extracted from the document using a scanner. The cryptokey is used to decode the data and verify the signature. This document therefore reads onto claims 1,2,5,6,8,12,13,16,19,21&23.

Inventive step

3.   The invention as defined in claims 3,4,7,17&18 is obvious in view of what has already been disclosed in the document cited above in paragraph 1 and the following document:

US 2002/0020746 A1 (ROUSTAEI) see esp. claim 1

4.   EP 0011671 discloses that encoded data (16 – fig 1) can be decoded using a cryptokey printed on the document. The document also discloses encoding and printing the data on a document using a cryptokey. It is therefore felt that a man skilled in the art would consider it obvious to scan a cryptokey on a document and use this key to encode data and then print the encoded data (16) on the document (i.e. printed coded data derived from the scanned cryptokey). Therefore claims 3,4&7 do not contain the required inventive step.

5.   US 2002/0020746 discloses that "adapting" an encoded visual image so that it "blends in" or is "visually compatible with other images on the document" is well known in the art. Therefore claims 17&18 do not contain the required inventive step.

Clarity/inconsistency/support

6.   It is felt that the phrase "selecting data sufficient to authenticate the document" is obscure in scope.

[Examination Report contd.]

7.   It is also felt that the embodiment where the key is a "personal identification number" (i.e. claim 11) is not clear as this key would not appear to encode any selected data (as required by claim 1).